R E M A R K S

    Reconsideration of this application is respectfully
requested.

    According to the present invention as recited in independent
claim 14 a system is provided which comprises: (i) a plurality of
image-processing apparatuses which are coupled to a network, and
each of which includes a rasterizer to conduct a rasterizing
operation for rasterizing image data that represents an image and
for outputting the rasterized image data; and (ii) an image-
printing apparatus coupled to the network, which is coupled to
the plurality of image-processing apparatuses through the
network, and which includes an image-forming section which forms
a reproduced image on a sheet.

    As recited in independent claim 14, the plurality of
image-processing apparatuses are divided into a plurality of
groups, each of which includes at least one of the
image-processing apparatuses.

    And as recited in independent claim 14, a first image-
processing apparatus belonging to a first one of the groups is
capable of performing the rasterizing operation in response to a
request by a second image-processing apparatus belonging to a
second one of the groups, and the second image-processing
apparatus belonging to the second group comprises a storage
section to store access restriction information for specifying

the first group as a group to which an accessing right is given
and as including an image-processing apparatus to which the
rasterizing operation can be requested.

In addition, like independent claim 14, independent claim 16
recites a plurality of image-processing apparatuses which are
divided into a plurality of groups, and an image-printing
apparatus, wherein a first image-processing apparatus belonging
to a first one of the groups is capable of performing the
rasterizing operation in response to a request by a second
image-processing apparatus belonging to a second one of the
groups.

According to independent claim 16, moreover, the system
comprises a server that is coupled to the network, wherein the
server comprises a storage section to store access restriction
information for specifying the first group as including an image-
processing apparatus that is capable of performing the
rasterizing operation in response to a request, and the server
gives an accessing right to access the first group to the second
image-processing apparatus belonging to the second group.

Thus, with the structure recited in independent claims 14
and 16, the plurality of image-processing apparatuses coupled to
the network are divided into a plurality of groups, each of which
includes at least one of the image-processing apparatuses, and a
first image-processing apparatus belonging to a first one of the

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groups is capable of performing the rasterizing operation in
response to a request by a second image-processing apparatus
belonging to a second one of the groups, wherein the second image-
processing apparatus itself (claim 14) or a server (claim 16)
stores access restriction information. With this structure, it is
possible to improve the efficiency of the rasterizing operations
and printing operations to be performed in the whole system.

     More specifically, with the system of claim 14, the second
image-processing apparatus can request the first image-processing
apparatus to conduct the rasterizing operation for rasterizing
the image data based on the access restriction information, which
is stored in advance in the storage section, for specifying the
first group as a group to which the accessing right is given and
as including the first image-processing apparatus to which the
rasterizing operation can be requested.

     In addition, with the system of claim 16, the server stores
the access restriction information in advance in the storage
section provided in the server, so that the server can give the
accessing right to access the first image-processing apparatus,
belonging to the first one of the groups, to the second
image-processing apparatus belonging to the second group.
Accordingly, the second image-processing apparatus can request
the first image image-processing apparatus to conduct the

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rasterizing operation, <u>based on the accessing right</u>, which is given by the server.

Then, according to the present invention as recited in independent claims 14 and 16, the image-printing apparatus can form the reproduced image on the sheet, based on the rasterized image data, which is rasterized and outputted by the first image-processing apparatus, as well. Therefore, according to the system configuration recited in independent claims 14 and 16, it becomes possible to effectively improve the efficiency of the rasterizing operations and the printing operations to be conducted in the whole system. See also page 46, line 17 to page 48, line 2, with respect to advantageous effects that can be achieved with the structure recited in independent claims 14 and 16.

It is respectfully submitted that even in combination, previously cited US 2002/0003897 ("Tanaka") and newly cited US 2004/0021893 ("Stevens et al") do not disclose, teach or suggest the features recited in independent claims 14 and 16.

In the first paragraph on page 3 of the Final Office Action and the paragraph bridging pages 5 and 6 of the Final Office Action, the Examiner acknowledges that Tanaka does not disclose a system comprising an image-printing apparatus <u>and a plurality of image-processing apparatuses divided into groups</u> or the structure related thereto recited in independent claims 14 and 16. For

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this reason, the Examiner has cited Stevens et al to supply the
missing teachings of Tanaka.

Stevens et al discloses a system for enabling a group of
printers to print a document. More specifically, Stevens et al
discloses dividing a plurality of printers into subgroups based
on location and/or printing capability. According to Stevens et
al, a computer 104 may transmit a document 140 to be printed to
all of the printers in a selected subgroup (paragraphs [0043]-
[0050]), and the user can print the document 140 from a desired
one of the printers in the subgroup. The user prints the
document 140 by providing the appropriate input to the printer,
which includes a job name and PIN specified by the user
(paragraphs [0051]-[0053]).

On page 3 of the Final Office Action the Examiner asserts
that Stevens et al discloses that the printers a storage device
to store the document 140 received from the computer 104.

The Examiner also asserts that the storage device of Stevens
et al stores access restriction information. As support, the
Examiner cites Figs. 4 and 5 and paragraphs [0046] and [0051]-
[0053] of Stevens et al.

It appears that the Examiner is referring to the user PIN
number disclosed at paragraphs [0046] and [0051]-[0053] of
Stevens et al. However, the PIN number disclosed by Stevens et

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al _clearly_ does not at all correspond to the access restriction information recited in claims 14 and 16.

Indeed, according to Stevens et al, the PIN information is provided so that a _user_ can print a job from a desired printer by using the job name and the PIN number. The PIN number of Stevens et al clearly does not designate another subgroup of printers as a group to which an accessing right is given and as including an image-processing apparatus to which the rasterizing operation can be requested (even if the printers of Stevens et al were considered image-processing apparatus as recited in claims 14 and 16, as asserted by the Examiner).

By contrast, according to the present invention as recited in independent claim 14 the access restriction information is stored in an image processing apparatus belonging to the second group and specifies the first group as a group to which an accessing right is given and as including an image-processing apparatus to which the rasterizing operation can be requested.

Moreover, according to the present invention as recited in independent claim 16, the access restriction information is stored in the server and specifies the first group as including an image-processing apparatus that is capable of performing the rasterizing operation in response to a request. And as recited in claim 16, the server gives an accessing right to access the

first group to the second image-processing apparatus belonging to the second group.

Clearly the user PIN number disclosed by Stevens et al, which is provided to allow a user to instruct a document to be printed from a desired printer, does not at all correspond to access restriction information as recited in claim 14 or claim 16.

And it is respectfully submitted that none of the other disclosure in paragraphs [0046] or [0051]-[0053] (cited by the Examiner with respect to access restriction information) of Stevens et al at all suggests the access restriction information as recited in claim 14 or claim 16.

Thus, it is respectfully submitted that Stevens et al merely discloses dividing a plurality of printers (instead of the plurality of image-processing apparatuses, as recited in claims 14 and 16) into a plurality of groups according to the functions of the printers and/or the installation locations of the printers, so that a print job can be sent to the printers of a selected subgroup, and so that the user can select a desired printer from the printers retaining the print job.

Accordingly, Stevens et al completely fails to disclose or suggest the access restriction information as recited in claim 14 or claim 16 or an accessing right established for controlling the communication between an image-processing apparatus belonging to

a first group and an image-processing apparatus belonging to a
second group, or any other feature equivalent to the access
restriction information and the accessing right according to
claim 14 or claim 16.

Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that even if
Stevens et al were combinable with Tanaka in the manner suggested
by the Examiner, the present invention as recited in independent
claims 14 and 16 still would not be achieved or rendered obvious.

In particular, it is respectfully submitted that even in
combination, Tanaka and Stevens et al do not suggest any features
relating to access restriction information, an accessing right,
or an image-processing apparatus belonging to a first group that
is capable of performing a rasterizing operation in response to a
request by an image-processing apparatus belonging to a second
group in the manners recited in independent claim 14 and
independent claim 16.

And it is respectfully submitted that the other cited
references also fail to disclose, teach or suggest the features
recited in independent claim 14 and independent claim 16.

It is respectfully pointed out, moreover, that the
Examiner's rejection of claim 16 does not address the recitation
of a server in claim 16, and does not address that the server
comprises the storage section to store the access restriction
information and gives an accessing right to access the first

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group to the second image-processing apparatus belonging to the

second group.

    In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that

independent claims 14 and 16 and claims 15 and 17 respectively

depending therefrom clearly patentably distinguish over Tanaka

and Stevens et al, taken singly or in combination, under 35 USC

102 as well as under 35 USC 103.

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    Allowance of the claims and the passing of this application

to issue are respectfully solicited.

    If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or

recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the

undersigned for prompt action.

                    Respectfully submitted,

                    /Douglas Holtz/

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